

P204

Grace Notes Radio Program

SERIES: The Christmas Story

TITLE: The season to be busy?

SONGS: Hope is Born

Worship the Gift

INTRO: HO HO HO 'Tis the season to be jolly! From the day after Thanksgiving, until the 25th of December, everybody is HAPPY. We hear Christmas music, shop 'til we drop, go to parties and attend performances. Then on the 26th of December, it's ALL OVER. We're left with un-decorating, bills, extra pounds, and even illness, because we ate and partied too much. All this for one day!

Christmas, should really be in our hearts, EVERY day of the year! So...how can we prevent ourselves from being caught up in all of this?

By focusing on the true meaning of Christmas.

Today on Grace Notes, Barbara Sandbek is going to do just that. She'll begin a series on the Christmas Story, and bring out some interesting points you may not have considered. So prepare to be blessed - and don't miss a single broadcast as she unfolds the event with a Christmas song...

******* LENGTH: 4:00**

***** WORSHIP THE GIFT *****

******* ****

Medley:

Song: It came upon a midnight clear

Writers: Edmond H. Sears and Richard S. Willis

Song: Away In A Manger

Writer: William J. Kirkpatrick

Song: What Child Is This

Writer: William C. Dix

Song: O Little Town Of Bethlehem

Writers: Phillip Brooks and Lewis H. Redner

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*It came upon the midnight clear
That glorious song of old
From angels bending near the earth
To touch their harps of gold*

*Away in a manger no crib for a bed
The little Lord Jesus laid down His sweet head
The stars in the sky looked down where He lay
The little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay*

*What Child is this who laid to rest
On Mary's lap is sleeping
Whom angels greet with anthems sweet
While shepherds watch are keeping*

*O little town of Bethlehem
How still we see thee lie
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep
The silent stars go by
Yet in the dark street shineth
The everlasting light
The hopes and fears of all the years
Are met in thee tonight*

Sleep in heavenly peace

Are you ready for Christmas?

There are so many expectations and obligations. People are going crazy; planning, buying, decorating and baking to celebrate a 'day' rather than an event - Christ's birth. No wonder there's frustration, anxiety and depression.

There's hardly time to think about why or, most importantly, 'Who' we're celebrating.

We, as Believers, need to make sure we're not too BUSY to take advantage of the opportunities to proclaim Christ. This is a great time of year to share the Gospel.

As part of our ministry outreach, we conduct a Christmas Concert at a local mall. We present the Christmas story from the Bible and include the Gospel message. Last year a girl who attended said she was surprised we were allowed to do such a thing in public. We just speak what's in our hearts, like Paul did. And guess what? There were a good number of people who stop to listen. The mall has more customers, and they ask us back.

You never know what you can do unless you try!

I want to help make this season different. First, here are some ways to capture the true meaning of Christmas...

**Make a birthday cake and decorate your home for Jesus' birthday...
sing carols...help a needy family...invite a lonely person to dinner...
put up a manger scene and keep it up all year long..
and...read the Christmas story.**

That's what we plan to do on the next few programs. I'm going to talk about the Christmas story as a story. We'll look at the players and see how their lives were affected by playing the role.

While we're at it, see if you can identify with one of the characters and live out their role with them.

Let's begin...

God wrote this true story to introduce the greatest man that ever lived - Jesus.

God advertised this story some 700 years before it occurred through the prophet Isaiah, who foretold it, but never lived to see it.

He wrote in Isaiah 9:6...

Unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given. And the government shall be upon His shoulder, and His Name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, Almighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of peace.

God promoted the story through a man called John the Baptist. Here was a man who sacrificed the comforts of home to prepare himself for the part. He lived in the solitude of the wilderness and was taught by God. He was even killed in the line of duty.

John was not your typical preacher. He didn't wear a three piece suit – rather he wore a camel hair tunic with a leather belt around his waist. His diet was strange, too - grasshoppers and wild honey. This certainly wasn't the kind of person, one would think should be chosen to announce the coming of the Messiah King. But, you know God's ways are not our ways -

GOD USES PECULIAR PEOPLE TO DO HIS WORK.

God chose Elizabeth and Zechariah to be his parents. The Bible says they lived upright, or Godly, lives. They were READY to be used by God.

GOD USES PEOPLE WHO ARE SPIRITUALLY PREPARED TO DO HIS WORK.

But there was one problem. Elizabeth was barren. In those days a woman was cursed if she couldn't have children. According to human standards, she was too old to conceive.

But God's ways are not our ways.

YOU ARE NEVER TOO OLD FOR GOD TO USE YOU.

Elizabeth could have been bitter about her situation, but she remained faithful. Our faith is tested most when we can't figure out how God can make it happen.

Faithfulness and a right attitude make a way for a blessing. She indeed received a great blessing – a son who prepared the way for Jesus.

Listen to a summary of Jesus' life I read on a Christmas card...

He was born in an obscure village, the child of a peasant woman. He grew up in another village where He worked in a carpenter shop until He was thirty. For three years He was an itinerant preacher. He never wrote a book, held an office, had a family, or owned a home. He didn't go to college or visit a big city. He never traveled more than two hundred miles from where He was born. He did none of the things that usually accompany greatness. His only credentials were Himself. While He was dying, His executioners gambled for His garments, the only property He had on earth. Twenty centuries have come and gone and He is still the central figure of the human race. All the armies that ever marched, navies that ever sailed, parliaments that ever sat, kings that ever reigned put together have not affected the life of man on this earth as much as that one solitary life of Jesus Christ.

The Christmas story was not just an historical event - it needed to happen. Why? Because, mankind broke fellowship with God, so He devised a plan to woo us to Himself with His undeniable love, and restore that fellowship.

God gave His everything when He executed this plan.

The THEME of this story is in John 3:16...

For God so loved the world that He gave His only Begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him shall not perish but have everlasting life.

Jesus came...lived among us, suffered...died...and rose again... to give the greatest gift of all time - eternal life to all who believe.

What did Jesus, the key player, give up to play this role?

2 Corinthians 8:9 says...

For you know the GRACE of our Lord Jesus Christ that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, so that you through His poverty might become rich.

Grace has entered into our lives through Christ's incarnation and where there's grace– there's hope.

***** **WRITERS: BOURGEOIS, BRENT THOMAS/BRICKMAN,**
***** HOPE IS BORN *** JAMES MERRILL/MC KELVEY, DOUGLAS**
***** **KAINE/MASTERS, BLAIR**
LENGTH: 3:01

*Starlight falling on the snow
Fire glows within
Celebrate the joyful news
Hope is born again*

*There is holly 'round the doorway
There is cider on the stove
And the sound of Psalm will fill the air
As the family gathers close*

*Lift your voices high and sing
Grace has entered in
Praises to the infant King
Hope is born again*

*Through the frost upon the window
See the stocking on the
Where the light reflects the cheerfulness
That's growing in our hearts*

*Lift your voices high and sing
Grace has entered in
Celebrate the joyful news
Hope is born again*

*Lift your voices high and sing
Grace has entered in
Praises to the infant King
Hope is born again*

*And the hope of that first Christmas
The day that heaven came to Earth*

*Now it comes again and fills our heart
As we celebrate his birth*

*Starlight falling on the snow
Fire glows within
Celebrate the joyful news
Hope is born again
Hope is born again*

Thanks for joining the program.

We need to know if you've been blessed by this ministry - so please write and tell us at....

Sandbek Ministries

P.O. Box 581

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or email us through our web site at www.sandbekministries.com.

Why not send along a Christmas gift to support this ministry?

Join us on our next program - we'll continue with the Christmas Story.